

Please amend the Application as follows.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The present listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing tungsten carbide ~~comprising~~ consisting of:

- (a) carburizing a material selected from the group consisting of tungsten powder, tungsten precursor compound powder and combinations thereof, at a temperature ranging from 850° to 950°, and in the presence of a carburizing gas phase,
 - said carburizing gas phase comprising a mixture of CO and CO₂, said carburizing gas phase having a CO₂ content which is above the Boudouard equilibrium content corresponding to the carburization temperature, and
 - wherein the carburizing step is carried out with a carbon activity ranging from 0.4 to less than 1; and
- (b) heat treating the tungsten carbide formed in step (a) at a temperature ranging from 1,150°C to 1,800°C, thereby forming tungsten carbide.

11. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 10, wherein carburizing step (a) is carried out with a carbon activity ranging from 0.4 to 0.9.

12. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 10, wherein carburizing step (a) is conducted at a temperature of from 900°C to 950°C.

13. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 10, wherein carburizing step (a) is conducted over a period ranging from 4 to 10 hours.

14. (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 10, wherein the tungsten precursor compound powder is tungsten oxide powder.

15. (Canceled)